

1711.22.
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Parish-Church of

St. *SEPULCHRE*,

May the 24th, 1711.

B E I N G

Thursday in Whitsun-Week,

At the Anniverfary Meeting of the

C H I L D R E N

Educated in the

CHARITY SCHOOLS

In and about the CITIES of

LONDON and WESTMINSTER.

Publiſh'd at the Request of ſeveral Gentlemen concern'd in that
C H A R I T Y.

By *ANDREW SNAPE*, D.D. *KS*
Rector of *St. Mary-at-Hill*, and Chaplain in Ordinary
to Her MAJESTY.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *Joſeph Downing* in *Bartholomew-Cloſe* ; And are to be
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Printed at the Request of the Right Honourable the Lord BISHOP of London, and the Right Honourable the Lord CHANCELLOR of Great Britain.

By ANDREW SNAPES, D.D.
Rector of St Mary-at-Hill, and Chaplain in Ordinary
to Her Majesty.

LONDON.

Printed by Joseph Downing in Bachelors-Walk; And sold by
Sold by J. Bury at the Rose in Ludgate-Street, 1711.

Matth. XI. 25.

*At that Time Jesus answered and said,
I thank thee, O Father, Lord of
Heaven and Earth, because thou
hast hid these Things from the wise
and prudent, and hast revealed
them unto Babes.*

THERE is no visible Connexion between these Words, and what pass'd immediately before; nor is it clearly evident, or generally agreed, what it was that gave Occasion to our Lord, thus to rejoice in Spirit, and to break out into these Expressions of Praise and Thankfulness to his heavenly Lord and Father. He is said to answer, tho' there is nothing in the whole Chapter, but that Question propounded to him in the Beginning of it, by Two of John's Disciples, that needs an Answer, or will admit of one; so that we can understand no more by that Phrase, but his con-

tinuing to speak, and proceeding in his Discourse; or else replying upon himself with Reference to some Subject, whereon he had been secretly ruminating in his Mind.

The Words that have the greatest Affinity with those now before us of any in the Chapter, are what we read in the End of the 5th Verse: *The Poor have the Gospel preached unto them.* Which Poor in that Verse, seems plainly to design the same Persons with Babes in this: Those Things which were hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto Babes, we may naturally interpret of the glad Tidings of that Gospel, which the Poor had preached unto them: The Poverty in one Place, and the Infancy in the other, are of the same Extent, both have an Allegorical Meaning besides the plain and literal One, and imply not only a Meanness of Fortune and Depression as to outward Circumstances, but a Poverty of Spirit and Dejectedness of Mind; not only the Weakness and Ignorance, but the artless and undisguised Simplicity, the Openness, Candor, and Submission of a little Child: Such a State, in short, as had both the greatest Need of spiritual Instruction, and was best qualified to receive it. These were the Poor to whom the Gospel was preach'd; these the Babes, to whom those Things were thought

thought fit to be reveal'd which were hid from the worldly wise.

The only Difference between the two Passages seems to be, that what our Saviour had urg'd in the 5th Verse, as a Proof of his own Mission, and an Argument that he was the true Messiah, he makes another Use of at this 25th Verse, where (after a pretty long Digression, containing a Character of St. John Baptist, and a Reproof to those incorrigible, unbelieving Cities, in which he had chiefly wrought his Miracles,) he takes Occasion from the high Satisfaction he found in the Success and Efficacy of his Doctrine, to improve the same Reflexion on his converting the Poor, and Illumination of the Dark and Ignorant, by which he had establish'd his own Credit, to the Exaltation of his Father's Name. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.*

From which Words, whether so connected or not with the abovementioned Passage toward the Beginning of the Chapter, yet at least as fit to be compar'd with it, as concurring in the same Design, and establishing the same important Truth, we may not im-

improperly take a Handle for considering the following Points.

I. That the Revealing the Myſteries of Chriſtianity to thoſe who were deſtitute of all ſaving Knowledge, but were ſpiritually Poor, and Babes in Underſtanding, was both a proper Evidence of our Saviour's divine Miſſion, and a juſt Matter of Praise to Almighty God.

II. That it is a very becoming Inſtance of Chriſtian Obedience, a laudable Imitation of our bleſſed Lord, and highly conducing to God's Glory, for us, in our ſeveral Capacities, to propagate that Revelation to thoſe who are yet Babes, and who have not yet been initiated, or not ſo fully as they ought, in the Myſteries of the Goſpel.

III. And this will eaſily lead me in the Third Place to apply the Subſtance of what ſhall be advanced under thoſe Two Heads, to the Religious and Chriſtian Undertaking that occasions this goodly Appearance of Poor, who have the Goſpel preached unto them; and of Babes, to whom thoſe Truths of Chriſtianity are reveal'd, in ſo edifying a Manner, which, thro' their own Default, are bid from the carnally wiſe and prudent.

I. I shall endeavour to convince you, that the Revealing the Mysteries of Christianity to those who were destitute of all saving Knowledge, but were spiritually Poor, and Babes in Understanding, was both a proper Evidence of our Saviour's divine Mission, and a just Matter of Praise to Almighty God.

Among the many other Advantages that were to accrue to Mankind upon the coming of the Messiah, among the distinguishing Marks and Characters that were given of him by the Prophets, it was foretold by *Isaiah 29. 19.* *The Meek also shall encrease their Joy in the Lord, and the Poor among Men shall rejoice in the holy One of Israel.* And again, *61. 1.* *The Lord hath anointed me to proclaim glad Tidings to the Poor.* And the Royal Psalmist, when, in the 10th Verse of the 68th Psalm, he had magnified God for having of his Goodness prepared for the Poor, proceeds to shew us in the following Verse, what sort of Preparation he had made for 'em, viz. a Provision of spiritual Food and Nourishment proper for the Soul, an Abundance of Doctrine and Plenty of the Word, in Opposition to that *Famine of the Word*, which is threaten'd in the Prophecy of *Amos*, as one of the greatest Curses that can befall a People. *The Lord gave the Word, great was the company of Preach-*
ers,

ers, or them that publish'd it, Psal. 68. 11. And elsewhere, Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings hast thou ordained Strength, Psal. 8. 2.

In Allusion to which Predictions our Saviour, in the Chapter of the Text, insists on his preaching the Gospel to the Poor, as one of the principal Marks by which he was to be known. For when John the Baptist had sent Two of his Disciples to enquire of him whether he were the Christ or not; Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? he returned this short but significant Answer by them; Go and tell John again those Things which ye do see and hear; the Blind receive their Sight, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised up, and the Poor have the Gospel preached unto them.

As much as to say, consider what you have either seen me do, or heard attested by credible Witnesses, compare my Actions with those ascrib'd by the Prophets to the Messiah, observe how exactly all Circumstances agree, and you will not need any Declaration of mine to certify you whether I am the Christ or not. And this indeed was the most proper and convincing Argument he could have us'd; for the bare averring such a Thing, without Proof, the pretending to a divine Mission, without shewing his Credentials, would
have

have given little Satisfaction, and scarce have procur'd him many Profelytes.

But when he appeals to their own Senses, when he desires 'em but to make a true Report of those Things which they had seen and heard, and leaves 'em to judge of his Authority by his Actions, he took the most effectual Way to remove all Scruples, and to leave 'em without Excuse, if they did not believe in him. Those who would never have given him any Credit on his own Word and Asseveration, were much better convinced, when he bid them believe *for the very Work's sake*. When they beheld the maim'd and defective Organs of Sense and Motion, which were lost beyond the Help of Physick, or Recovery of Art, restor'd to their former Use, without any other Application than that of a few Words; when they beheld dead Bodies restor'd to Life, and dying Ones to Health; how the Poor and Calamitous of the Earth were invited to be Partakers of the gracious Terms of the Gospel Covenant; and those who had no Possessions on Earth, were taught to expect a Kingdom in Heaven: All which were such visible Tokens and Indications of the true Messiah; there was no opposing such powerful Conviction, nor

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withstanding the Force of such irresistible Evidence.

But it may possibly be objected, That the last of these Tokens, which is most to our present Purpose, had nothing miraculous in it, and was therefore a less distinguishing Note of his Divinity than any of the others. Men may be apt to imagine, that there needed no supernatural Aid or divine Impulse to enable him to execute the Office of a Preacher, and instruct the ignorant Multitude in the Rules of plain Morality, for which he might easily be qualified by a Readiness of Invention and Fluency of Speech, without a Commission from on High, and by less than a divine Power.

But yet if we respect the amazing Efficacy and Success of the Doctrine he deliver'd, and the Influence it had on the Lives of those that heard it; how convincingly he silenced the Gain-saying, how graciously he enlighten'd the Ignorant, how happily he reform'd the Vicious, with what admirable Dexterity he avoided the insidious Questions of the Captious and Ensnaring; if we consider how all who heard him, even when a Child, were amaz'd at his Understanding and Answers. How the Officers, who were sent to apprehend him, had not Power to execute their Commission, but with

with Astonishment confess'd, that *never Man spake like that Man*. If we consider the peculiar Worth and Excellence of those Rules which he enjoin'd, of what exceeding Benefit and Importance they are to Mankind, and how much they tend to the improving humane Nature, and raising it to the highest Degree of Perfection; it will sufficiently appear, that in the Discharge of this humble and condescending Office, he acted by as divine a Power, and gave as convincing Proofs of his heavenly Original, as in any of the others; that he was no less considerable in that Mount on which he preach'd, than in that on which he was transfigur'd; when he convers'd with Publicans and Sinners, than when he talk'd with *Moses* and *Elias*; when he familiarly stil'd himself the Son of Man, than when he was proclaim'd the Son of God from Heaven; when he converted those who were dead in their Sins, and rais'd in 'em a Newness of Life, than when, in a literal Sense, he rais'd from the dead the departed *Lazarus*, and the Widow's Son.

Even the Obscurity and low Estate of those who first receiv'd the Publication, which by some of the Enemies of the Cross, has been urg'd as an Argument against the Credit of the Publisher, does, on the contrary, more

undeniably establish and confirm it. Thus it behoved Christ to converse, such lost Sheep was he to seek and save, such Sinners did he come to call to Repentance, to reduce such Wanderers into the Way, to be a Light to those who thus sat in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, and to guide their Feet into the Way of Peace.

Had he taken any other Measures in propagating his Religion; had he applied himself to the great and leading Men of the Age and Nation where he liv'd; had he courted the Powers that were then in Being, to countenance his Design; had he sought to establish it by the Help of a Confederate and united Faction, and the powerful Influence of a prevailing Party, (which humane Prudence would have suggested to him, as the most likely Methods of succeeding, if he had not been conscious that it was able to make its Way by the Force of its own native Conviction, tho' in the Hands of the weakest Instruments) he would not have corresponded so exactly with the Description of the Messiah by the Prophets, and we should have wanted one powerful Argument for the Truth of Christianity.

And

And as his proceeding in this Manner was a proper Evidence of his being sent from Heaven, so was it likewise a just Matter of Praise to Almighty God. The faithful Execution of his Will, and Accomplishment of his Purposes, by such Methods, and under such Regulations as he has thought fit to prescribe, is always highly acceptable and well-pleasing to him, and was never more acceptable than in the several Steps that were taken by the Redeemer of Mankind, toward the effecting that Redemption. If at the first Formation of the World he survey'd the several Parts of his Workmanship, and with Pleasure pronounc'd, *that they were good*, i. e. conformable to the Model in his eternal Mind, and adorn'd with such Kinds and Degrees of Perfection, as he had allotted to the several Species that compos'd it; with how much greater Satisfaction did he survey the new Creation, the Renovation of fall'n Man, his Regeneration *by Water and the Holy Ghost*, the sanctifying and cleansing him, making in him *a new Heart and a new Spirit*, instructed in the Knowledge of God's Will, enclin'd to the Observance of it, and set right in the Way that leads to eternal Life!

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Such a glorious and happy Change he resolved to make, and to effect it by the Mediation of his ever-blessed Son: And that Son who was all Obedience, whose Meat and Drink it was to perform his Father's Will, and to cause it to be perform'd by others, undertook the gracious Work, and not only executed the main Substance of his Commission, but complied with it in the Manner and all the Circumstances. And particularly with Regard to the Persons to whom the Truths of the Gospel were first to be declar'd, who were first to be *begotten again into a lively Hope*; to be *renewed in their inward Man*, and in the Spirit of their Mind: He applied himself, as directed, not to the Great and Powerful, not to the Wise and Learned, but to those of low Condition and ordinary Capacities; that when the Cause should appear to thrive so well, and spread so far, under the Management of such weak and despicable Agents; the Power by which they acted, and the Truths which they proclaim'd, might be confess'd to be of God, and not of Man, that all Men might ascribe the

1 Cor. I. Glory to him who *destroyeth the Wisdom of the*
 19. *Wise, and bringeth to nothing the Understanding*
 Ver. 26, *of the Prudent*; and for that Reason hath not
 27. *called many wise Men after the Flesh, not many*
 Mighty,

Mighty, not many Noble; but hath chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the Wise, and the weak Things of the World to confound the Things that are Mighty.

It was his pleasing Reflexion on the Display of God's Glory in accomplishing his Designs by the most unlikely Means, that vented its self in those Expressions of Joy we meet with in my Text; *I thank Thee, O Father, &c.*

The proper Matter of his rejoicing was not, we may be sure, the Concealment of the Gospel Truths from any Body. He who was the true Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World: Who would have all to be sav'd, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth, could not be delighted with any One's Continuance in Error. The Rich and Knowing were to have their Share of the Revelation likewise, but the Poor and Ignorant were the Channel thro which it was to be convey'd to 'em. This happy Order and Oeconomy of dispensing the Gospel: This raising the Poor out of the Mire, and setting him above the Princes of the People; this filling the Hungry with good Things, and sending the Rich empty away, till those being first replenish'd, should invite them to partake of their spiritual Sustainance: This, I say, was the direct Ground of his Exultation,
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Joh. I. 19.

1 Tim. II.

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not that these Things were *totally* hid from the Wise and Prudent, but that they were *so long* hid till after they had been reveal'd to Babes. I am now to shew in the

II. *Second Place*, that it is a very becoming Instance of Christian Obedience, a laudable Imitation of our blessed Lord, and highly conducing to God's Glory, for us, in our several Capacities, to propagate that Revelation to those who are still Babes, and who have not yet been initiated, or not so fully as they ought, in the Mysteries of the Gospel.

The great Author of our Religion having imparted to his Church such saving and useful Truths, as were sufficient to direct us in the Way to Happiness, and appointed a Succession of Pastors and Teachers, with an Authority derivable to others throughout all Ages, to preserve the Knowledge of those sacred Truths, to spread and diffuse 'em thro' all Nations, and publish to the whole World the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation; to declare that Method of Reconciliation to God, and of attaining eternal Life, which he had declar'd to them; having done thus much, I say, and finish'd the Work he had to do on Earth, he was taken from 'em into Heaven, but left 'em with this Promise, that he would still

still be spiritually present with 'em *to the End of the World*; that he would send 'em *another Comforter*, that should *lead them into all Truth*, and enable 'em to lead others, and with an exprefs Charge, that they should make it their Endeavour so to do.

Thus did our blessed Redeemer lay the Foundation of an universal Church, with sufficient Encouragement to the whole Race of Mankind to shelter themselves within its Pale, and become Converts to Christianity, and with a Command to those who are already admitted, who have been enlight-
ned, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, with a Command, I say to them, to be zealous in imparting that Light to others, which has been so freely communicated to them; to demonstrate the Sincerity of that Love of God and their Neighbour, which, if they are true Members of the Christian Church, must necessarily possess their Hearts, by shewing a tender Regard for the Souls of Men; by revealing those Treasures of hidden Wisdom, of which they have been hitherto unhappily depriv'd; by labouring with all Diligence and Care, with all Humility and Condescension, with all Earnestness and Affection, to rectify their Mi-
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stakes,

Heb. 6.
4, 5.

stakes, to remove their Prejudices, and give 'em as clear an Understanding as may be of the Things that belong to their Happiness and Salvation.

If all who have profess'd the Name of Christ, had been acted by such a Spirit as this; if every one would have applied to himself that Exhortation of our Saviour to St. Peter, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren*: Had every one made it a Matter of Conscience, not barely to be a Christian himself, but to contribute in the best Manner he was able to the making others so; if such a Spirit as this, I say, had all along prevail'd among the Members of the Church, the dark Corners of the Earth might long since have been illuminated, Christendom might have had the same Bounds with the habitable Globe; not only the Sound of the Gospel might have been heard, but its Doctrines received in all Lands, and all *the Ends of the World* might have seen and enjoy'd the Salvation of our God.

But how backward soever the Generality of Believers may have been in this Respect, or how short soever they may have fallen of what might justly be expected from them, this makes nothing at all against the Rule, their Duty lies plain before 'em, they are expressly

pressly commanded to follow after the Things wherewith one may edify another; to consider one another, to provoke unto Love and to good Works; not to seek their own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they may be saved; to have Compassion on their Brethren, and save them, plucking them [as Firebrands] out of the Fire.

From such imminent Danger we have all been preserved our selves; thus mercifully has our gracious Redeemer deliver'd us from the Brinks of Ruine, released us from the most galling Yoke and slavish Bondage, and brought us from the Power of Satan unto God. And can we refuse to copy him in those good Works, so far as our Capacity extends, of which we our selves have been the happy Objects? Shall we, on whom the Light of the Gospel has shone in so glorious a Manner, eclipse and contract the Beams of it, and not suffer 'em to dart into those obscure Regions, where the Prince of this World still rules with a despotick Sway, blinding his Vassals with the grossest Superstitions, and corrupting them with the foulest Immoralities? Do we think our own Happiness would be the less, if we should contribute to the Encrease of theirs? Are we jealous of Rivals in God's Favour, or apprehensive that the Kingdom of Heaven would not be large enough

to receive us, if too many should be saved? Would we shelter our own Indevotion, and Profaneness, and Neglect of Duty, under the greater Enormities of those unenlightened Wretches; and imagine we shall be reputed less culpable for being *bad Christians*, because there are some who are *meer Heathens*? Or is it nothing else but a supine Negligence and lazy Inadvertence; a Contempt of those miserable People who are destitute of Christian Knowledge, and not thinking them worth our Notice, that makes the glorious Design of communicating the Gospel to them, go on so heavily, and meet with so small an Encouragement? Alas! how different a Notion have we of the Value of Souls from that of our blessed Lord; or what must have become of us, if he had set as low a Price on ours, as we on theirs? How justly may he reproach us for such uncharitable Neglect, as the Master in the Parable did the unmerciful Servant; *Shouldest not thou also have had Compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Pity on thee?* How ill do we follow the Direction he has given us a little after my Text: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart?* How unjustly do we *hide our Light under a Bushel*, and *take away that Key of Knowledge*, that should unlock the Mysteries of the Gospel

spel to those from whom they are as yet hidden ! How little do we consult the Glory of God, which ought to be the chief End of all our Actions, by deferring to make known the Wonders of his Providence, and his infinite Love to Man, in so graciously contriving the Means of his Restauration to Grace and Favour ; where it must, and will be one Day made manifest, whether we will be the Instruments of it, or no : as if we were possess'd with a more than *Jewish* Selfishness, and resolved to confine that Redemption to our selves, which he intended for the universal Benefit of Mankind!

I am making these Expostulations among those, who, I know, are sensible of the Justness of them, and who have long been labouring to prevent the unhappy Occasion that has been given for them, and not without a good Degree of Success ; but the Concurrence of all Hands and Hearts is requisite toward the accomplishing a Work of so large a Compass, and the Want of that is what I sincerely lament ; but I am willing to believe, that *Her Majesty's* Gracious Letter, requiring a Collection to be made for the carrying on that godly Undertaking, and appointed to be read in all our Churches the next Lord's Day, will very much encrease
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the Number of those who make the Propagating of Christian Knowledge their peculiar Care, and that the Exhortations to that Purpose will have a good Effect; and therefore I will not too far anticipate the Subject.

I have a Charity of a nearer and more immediate Concern at present to recommend to you, if any farther Recommendation be requisite of those, whose innocent Look, whose modest Garb, whose unaffected Plainness, whose orderly Procession, whose towardly Manners and regular Behaviour, whose ready Submission to Discipline, and happy Improvement under it, do so engagingly plead for 'em, and carry such a winning Persuasion.

III. For this was the *Third Thing* I proposed, viz. to apply the Substance of what has been advanc'd under the **Two** former Heads, to the Religious and Christian Undertaking that occasions this goodly Appearance of *Poor*, who *have the Gospel preach'd unto them*; and of *Babes*, to whom those Truths of Christianity are *reveal'd*, which are *hid from the worldly wise*.

And sure if the revealing the Mysteries of the Gospel to those who, in any Sense, were Babes, was at first a Demonstration of the *Truth of Christianity*; the Revealing it now
with

with such Success, to these who are literally so, is a Demonstration of the *Power* of it. Such a well-laid Foundation in the Principles of the Christian Faith, so forward a Proficiency in Children of such tender Years; such a *Readiness to give an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them*, is no inconsiderable Proof that God is with us, of a Truth, and that such as are meek and tractable among us, *them will he teach his Way*.

If the bringing his Purposes to pass by the most helpless Agents and weakest Instruments, be conducive to God's Glory, and an Argument of his providential Care and Direction of humane Affairs; what Agents so helpless as these, what Instruments so weak? and yet, what *Strength has he ordained? What Praise has he perfected out of the Mouth of these Babes?* What an Air of primitive Simplicity do we see reviving? How blessed a Resemblance of the Beginnings of the Gospel-Age, in the several Parts of Her Majesty's Dominions? How laudable a Correspondence has been settled and maintained among the distant Promoters of this good Work, who carry on a religious Commerce, and negotiate for the Good of Souls? How pleasant is it to observe, that from the Time it was first undertaken,

taken, it has never intermitted or stood still, never cool'd upon their Hands, much less has it gone backward, but, as it appears, upon comparing every Year's Account, with that of the foregoing, the Number of Schools and Scholars, and the Contributions for maintaining them, have been still growing and encreasing, and the Lord has been continually *adding to the Church such as, we trust, shall be sav'd?* Thus is that *Grain of Mustard Seed*, which was *cast into the Ground*, become a *great Tree*, and that *Tree* is in a fair Probability of spreading to a Grove.

And I will not distrust, but that the delightful Spectacle of this Day, the humble Procession, the decent Appearance, the reverent Deportment, and the harmonious Consort of those Innocents now before you, far more affecting than the Solemnities of the gayest Triumph, or the fictitious Passions of a Theatrical Representation; I will not distrust, I say, but that so many persuasive Arguments and (if that could add any Weight to a Rhetorick so much more cogent) the earnest Endeavour of the Advocate who is now pleading in their Behalf, will, with God's Blessing, touch the Heart of some new Benefactor, and open some fresh Spring of Bounty to water and refresh these godly Nurseries

series, which give us so fair a Specimen of the Reformation of Manners in this Age, and I hope in God, will compleat and perfect it in the next at least.

When we observe the surprizing Proficiency of these Children in the Knowledge and Practice of their Duty, to a Degree that could scarce have been believ'd, till it was thus try'd; how few in so large a Number have prov'd remarkably vicious and incorrigible: How few have wanted either a Capacity to retain even long Catechetical Answers, with the Scripture-Proofs, or a decent Courage to pronounce 'em audibly and distinctly in a full Congregation, not even those of the Female Sex: This will convince us, how much the Soul of Man may be improv'd by good Nurture and Education; and that it is not any Inability or Defect of Nature, (which too often bears the Blame) but Negligence and Sloth, or a wrong Method of Instruction, that makes the Generality of other Children appear with less Advantage.

Blessed be God! we have many excellent Seminaries of Religion and Learning, where the Children of the better Sort may be well grounded in all useful Knowledge; in all that can adorn this Life, or fit 'em for a better.

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But without Disparagement or Injustice to those hopeful Nurseries, I may venture to affirm, that there is no Way of Instruction so generally successful, where there are so few Miscarriages, or so compleatly fram'd for the breeding up good Christians, as in these Charity-Schools.

Thus amply has the wise Providence of God, compensated the Disadvantages of the Poor and Indigent, in wanting many of the Conveniencies of this Life, by a more abundant Provision for their Happiness in the next. Had they been higher born, or more richly endow'd, they would have wanted this Manner of Education, of which those only enjoy the Benefit, who are low enough to submit to it, where they have such Advantages *without Money and without Price*, as the Rich cannot purchase with it; the Learning which is *given*, is generally more edifying to them, than that which is *sold* to others: Thus do they become more exalted in Goodness, by being depress'd in Fortune, and their Poverty is, in Reality, their Preferment.

Let us thankfully adore the divine Goodness, that, in the midst of an Age which seem'd abandon'd to Vice and Irreligion, abounding with so much Corruption, with so many Examples of Profaneness and Debauchery, has rais'd up such a Spirit of Piety and Cha-

Charity, and put it into the Hearts of many worthy Persons, to combine together for all good Purposes, to form themselves into Societies, to join their united Endeavours, and contribute largely out of the Substance wherewith He had blessed them, toward the extirpating of Vice and Ignorance, giving a new Turn to the State of Christianity, supporting and propagating that Religion, of which Profane Scoffers and Atheistical Cabals were plotting the Subversion.

That he has endu'd them with Constancy and Resolution to persevere in so good a Work, and *not to be weary of well-doing*; and enclin'd 'em to think no Labour too great, no Office too mean, that may be serviceable to the Christian Cause; that Persons of good Birth and liberal Fortunes, should submit to be the Overseers of those Poor, who are maintain'd by their own Charity; that they should make it their Business to look into their little Wants, and become, as it were, their Stewards and Servants, in Imitation of that lowly and condescending Act of our blessed Saviour, when *he wash'd the Feet of his own Disciples*, or when he told 'em, *I am among you as he that serveth*.

The many excellent Benefits that arise from this well-plac'd Charity, to the Children themselves, to Families, to Parishes, to the Church
and

and Nation, have been often set forth with great Advantage, on former Occasions of this Nature; many of which, tho' at first they were but *pious Presages*, have been since made good by undeniable Experience, as I doubt not but all the rest, which there has not yet been Time enough to make manifest, will appear to be upon farther Trial.

It has been the peculiar Happiness of this Charity, that there have been no Complaints of any Misapplication of the Funds that are destin'd to this pious Use, which are too often alledg'd against others of a publick Nature: No colourable Objection of any Kind has been made against it, nor indeed can it meet with Opposition from any, but those who are unwilling that the Empire of the Devil should be weaken'd, that Vice and Immorality should lose any Ground, and who are the declar'd Enemies of God and Goodness.

But however, the God of this World has blinded the Children of Disobedience, that they *will not see, nor understand, and be converted*; but despising the Treasures of God's Word, and the Light of his holy Gospel, put their Trust in *worldly Riches*, and value themselves upon their *carnal Policy*; *We thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that the Things which are thus hidden, thro' their own Default, from the wise and prudent, (as the World accounts Prudence) thou hast revealed unto these Babes.* For which, and all other thy Mercies:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the Praise, &c.

F I N I S.